

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
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SUBJECT: USG REPRESENTATION AT CANTON FAIR

REF: A) PEKING 0408 B) STATE 068516

SUMMARY: USLO RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT MAKE AN AUTHORATATIVE-LEVEL APPROACH TO PRCLO ON THE SUBJECT OF VISAS FOR HONG KONG CONGEN AND OTHER USG PERSONNEL WHO WISH TO ATTEND CANTON FAIRS OR VISIT USLO FOR LEGITIMATE PURPOSES ON TDY ASSIGNMENTS. IT SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR THAT THE USG TREATS PRCLO JUST AS IT WOULD ANY OTHER WASHINGTON DIPLOMATIC MISSION, AND EXPECTS THE PRC TO DO THE SAME, IN THE SPIRIT OF EQUALITY AND MUTUAL BENEFIT AND THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE. END SUMMARY.

1. USLO IS SERIOUSLY DISTURBED THROUGH NOT ENTIRELY SURPRISED BY THE LACK OF COOPERATIVE SPIRIT DEMONSTRATED BY THE PRC IN REJECTING THE APPLICATIONS OF HONG KONG CON GEN OFFICERS TO ATTEND THE SPRING CANTON FAIR. AS WE INDICATED FROM THE OUTSET (REF A) WE BELIEVE A FORCEFUL PRESENTATION SHOULD BE MADE TO THE PRC ON THIS MATTER, AND WE ARE NOW INCLINED TO FAVOR BROADENING THE SCOPE OF THE ISSUE TO INCLUDE THE ENTIRE SUBJECT OF APPLICATIONS FOR VISITS TO USLO BY HONG KONG CONGEN PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL FROM OTHER OVERSEAS POSTS WHOM WE HAVE WISHED TO BRING TO PEKING ON TDY. WE BELIEVE THAT SINCE THE CURRENT ISSUE WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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JOINED IN WASHINGTON, IT SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE HANDLED

BY THE DEPARTMENT WITH PRCLO, AND WE THINK THE DEPARTMENT'S APPROACH SHOULD BE AT AN AUTHORITATIVE LEVEL.

2. THE MAIN ISSUES AT STAKE ARE: A) EQUALITY OF TREATMENT OF USLO BY THE PRC VIS-A-VIS USG TREATMENT OF THE PRCLO AND B) CHINA'S TREATMENT OF USLO IN COMPARISON TO THAT WHICH THE PRC ACCORDS OTHER GOVERNMENTS. SO FAR AS USLO IS AWARE, THE PRCLO HAS BEEN ACCORDED EVERY COURTESY IN WASHINGTON, AND HAS BEEN TREATED BY THE USG EXACTLY AS WE WOULD TREAT ANY OTHER FOREIGN EMBASSY THERE. IF ANYTHING, OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT THE USG HAS BEEN LENIENT, PERHAPS EVEN PREFERENTIAL, IN APPLYING TO PRCLO THE VARIOUS TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS AND OTHER REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE OPERATIONS OF FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN THE US.

3. IN RETURN, THE CHINESE HAVE BEEN DECIDEDLY LESS COOPERATIVE IN THEIR TREATMENT OF USLO. DESPITE ATTENDANCE BY HONG KONG BASED GOVERNMENT TRADE PERSONNEL AT CANTON FAIRS BEING A ROUTINE PRACTICE, WE HAD TO FIGHT TOOTH AND NAIL LAST FALL TO OBTAIN VISAS FOR TWO CONGEN OFFICERS TO ASSIST US AT THE FAIR. SINCE THEN, OUR REQUESTS TO BRING OFFICERS ON TDY FROM HONG KONG AND OTHER OVERSEAS POSTS HAVE FOR THE MOST PART BEEN IGNORED BY THE CHINESE SIDE OR DENIED ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE CHINESE DO NOT DO PRECISELY THE SAME THING IN THE US. IN SEVERAL INSTANCES THIS HAS PLACED SEVERE STRAINS ON USLO PERSONNEL IN CARRYING ON THEIR NORMAL FUNCTIONS IN THE PRC. MEANWHILE, WE ARE CONTINUALLY AWARE THAT OTHER DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN PEKING DO NOT FACE THE SAME PROBLEM IN BRINGING OUTSIDERS FROM HONG KONG, OR ELSEWHERE, TO PEKING FOR LEGITIMATE WORK ON TDY OR EVEN JUST FOR SIGHTSEEING.

4. AS REGARDS THE CANTON FAIR, CHINA'S UNCOOPERATIVE ATTITUDE WILL, IF IT CONTINUES, REDUCE OUR ABILITY IN THE IMPORTANT WORK OF TRADE PROMOTION IN TWO WAYS. FIRST, OUR PERSONNEL IN CANTON WILL BE REDUCED, AND WE WILL HAVE GREATER DIFFICULTY IN ASSISTING THE MORE THAN 200 AMERICANS WHO ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND. MOST OF THOSE, IT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED, WILL BE BUYERS. SECOND, OUR HONG KONG COMMERCIAL OFFICERS, WHO THEMSELVES PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN PROMOTION

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OF SINO-US TRADE, WILL BE DENIED THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN CHINA'S SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT TRADE EVENT. INSTEAD, THEY WILL HAVE TO SIT BACK AND WATCH AS HONG KONG-BASED GOVERNMENT TRADE REPRESENTATIVES FROM BRITAIN, CANADA, JAPAN, GERMANY, AUSTRALIA, FRANCE, BELGIUM AND OTHER COUNTRIES PROCEED TO CANTON TO ATTEND THE FAIR. THIS STRIKES US AS CLEAR-CUT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE US, WHICH IS IN VIOLATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUALITY AND

MUTUAL BENEFIT AND OUT OF STEP WITH BOTH THE LETTER AND SPIRIT OF THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE WITH RESPECT TO FACILITATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF U.S.-PRC TRADE.

5. WE DO NOT KNOW IF THE VERDICT ON VISAS FOR CONGEN OFFICERS TO ATTEND THE SPRING CANTON FAIR CAN BE REVERSED, BUT WE THINK THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE USG TO VOICE IN STRONG TERMS ITS DISMAY AND DISPLEASURE AT THE WAY OUR REQUESTS FOR VISAS ARE BEING TREATED. WE BELIEVE WE MUST MAKE CLEAR TO THE CHINESE THAT IF THINGS CONTINUE THIS WAY THE USG WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER MEASURES TO BRING OUR TREATMENT OF PRCLO MORE INTO LINE WITH THE WAY THEY ARE TREATING US.

6. WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT THE DEPARTMENT HOLD A MEETING WITH A HIGH LEVEL OFFICER IN PRCLO TOGETHER WITH COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR CHANG TSIEN-HUA. DRAWING ON THE POINTS MADE ABOVE, WE BELIEVE THE ENTIRE QUESTION OF VIASA FOR USG PERSONNEL TO COME TO PEKING FOR TDY SHOULD BE DISCUSSED. WITH SPECIFIC REGARD TO THE CANTON FAIR, WE SHOULD EMPHASIZE THAT ATTENDANCE BY CONGEN PERSONNEL IS NECESSARY TO ENABLE US TO SERVICE PROPERLY THE HUNDREDS OF US BUSINESSMEN INVOLVED AND THAT IN ASKING FOR VISAS FOR THOSE PERSONNEL WE ARE DOING NO MORE THAN THE OTHER GOVERNMENTS MENTIONED. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT A MAJOR US GOAL IN CANTON IS TO PROMOTE INCREASED US IMPORTS, IN AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE THE BALANCE OF SINO-US TRADE, AND THAT THIS IS IN LINE WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUALITY AND MUTUAL BENEFIT AND THE SPIRIT OF THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE. WITHOUT DEMANDING A REVERSAL OF THE PRC DECISION ON THE RECENT CONGEN APPLICATIONS WE SHOULD EXPRESS OUR STRONG HOPE THAT THE DECISION IN THOSE CASES, AND PRC POLICY WITH REGARD TO ALL OTHER OUTSTANDING AND CONFIDENTIAL

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FUTURE APPLICATIONS WILL BE GIVEN SERIOUS RECONSIDERATION.

7. COMMENTS ON USLO PLANS TO COVER THE SPRING FAIR IF NO CONGEN OFFICERS ATTEND FOLLOW IN SEPTEL.
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